Beattie's Minstrel

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3rd Class

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THE MINSTREL.

BY JAMES BEATTIE.

WITH THIRTY-THREE DESIGNS BY BIRKET FOSTER,
ENGRAVED BY THE BROTHERS DALZIEL.

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PREFACE.

The design was to trace the progress of a Poetical Genius, born in a rude age, from the first dawning of fancy and reason, till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world as a Minstrel, that is, as an itinerant Poet and Musician;—a character which, according to the notions of our forefathers, was not only respectable, but sacred.

I have endeavoured to imitate Spenser in the measure of his verse, and in the harmony, simplicity, and variety of his composition. Antique expressions I have avoided; admitting, however, some old words, where they seemed to suit the subject; but I hope none will be found that are now obsolete, or in any degree not intelligible to a reader of English poetry.

To those who may be disposed to ask, what could induce me to write in so difficult a measure, I can only answer, that it

pleases my ear, and seems, from its Gothic structure and original, to bear some relation to the subject and spirit of the Poem. It admits both simplicity and magnificence of sound and of language, beyond any other stanza that I am acquainted with. It allows the sententiousness of the couplet, as well as the more complex modulation of blank verse. What some critics have remarked, of its uniformity growing at last tiresome to the ear, will be found to hold true only when the poetry is faulty in other respects.

BOOK I.

"Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musæ,
Quarum sacra fero, ingenti perculsus amore,
Accipiant."—— VIRGIL.

I.

Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar:

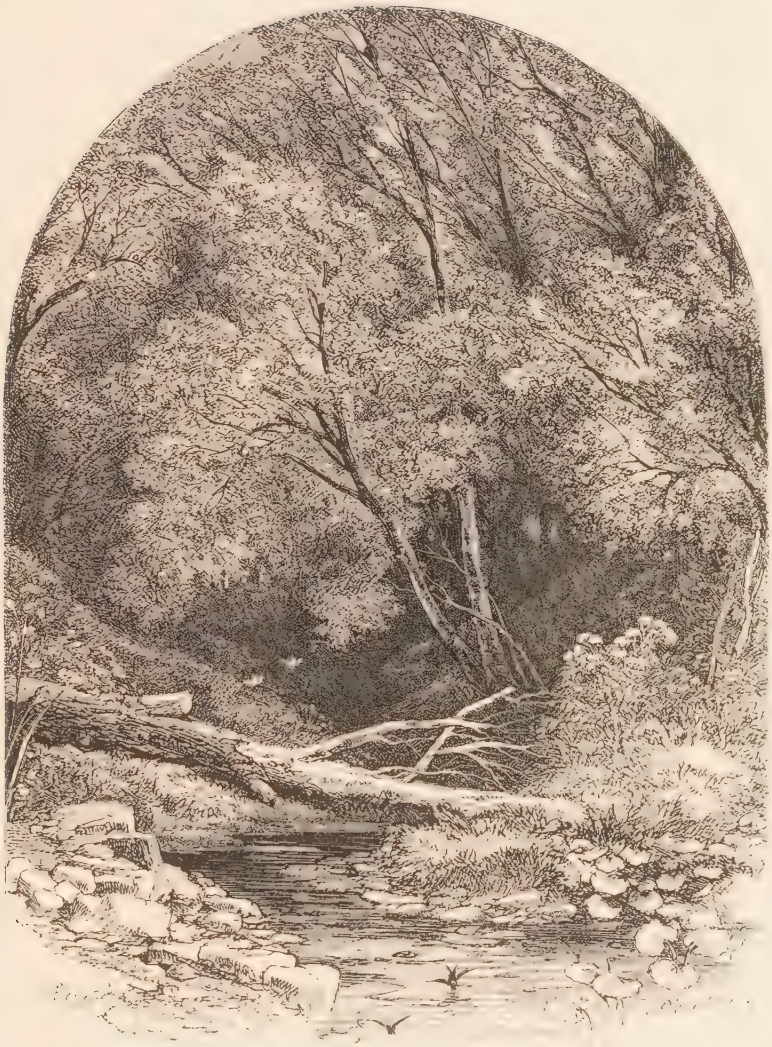
Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime
Has felt the influence of malignant star,
And waged with Fortune an eternal war;
Checked by the scoff of Pride, by Envy's frown,
And Poverty's unconquerable bar,
In life's low vale remote has pined alone,
Then dropt into the grave, unpitied and unknown!

II.

And yet the languor of inglorious days
Not equally oppressive is to all;
Him who ne'er listen'd to the voice of praise,
The silence of neglect can ne'er appal.
There are, who, deaf to mad Ambition's call,
Would shrink to hear th' obstreperous trump of Fame;
Supremely blessed, if to their portion fall
Health, competence, and peace. Nor higher aim
Had HE, whose simple tale these artless lines proclaim.

III.

The rolls of fame I will not now explore;
Nor need I here describe, in learned lay,



How forth THE MINSTREL fared in days of yore,
Right glad of heart, though homely in array ;

His waving locks and beard all hoary grey :
While from his bending shoulder decent hung
His harp, the sole companion of his way,
Which to the whistling wind responsive rung :
And ever as he went some merry lay he sung.

IV.

Fret not thyself, thou glittering child of pride,
That a poor Villager inspires my strain ;
With thee let Pageantry and Power abide :
The gentle Muses haunt the sylvan reign ;
Where through wild groves at eve the lonely swain
Enraptured roams, to gaze on Nature's charms :
They hate the sensual, and scorn the vain,
The parasite their influence never warms,
Nor him whose sordid soul the love of gold alarms.

V.

Though richest hues the peacock's plumes adorn,
Yet horror screams from his discordant throat.
Rise, sons of harmony, and hail the morn,
While warbling larks on russet pinions float :

Or seek at noon the woodland scene remote,
Where the grey linnets carol from the hill.
O, let them ne'er, with artificial note,
To please a tyrant, strain the little bill,
But sing what Heaven inspires, and wander where they will.

VI.

Liberal, not lavish, is kind Nature's hand;
Nor was perfection made for man below.

Yet all her schemes with nicest art are planned ;
Good counteracting ill, and gladness woe.
With gold and gems if Chilian mountains glow ;
If bleak and barren Scotia's hills arise ;
There plague and poison, lust and rapine grow ;
Here peaceful are the vales, and pure the skies,
And Freedom fires the soul and sparkles in the eyes.

VII.

Then grieve not, thou, to whom th' indulgent Muse
Vouchsafes a portion of celestial fire ;
Nor blame the partial Fates, if they refuse
Th' imperial banquet, and the rich attire.
Know thine own worth, and reverence the lyre.
Wilt thou debase the heart which God refined ?
No : let thy heaven-taught soul to Heaven aspire,
To fancy, freedom, harmony resigned ;
Ambition's grovelling crew for ever left behind.

VIII.

Canst thou forego the pure ethereal soul
In each fine sense so exquisitely keen,
On the dull couch of Luxury to loll,

Stung with disease, and stupified with spleen ;
Fain to implore the aid of Flattery's screen,
E'en from thyself, thy loathsome heart to hide
(The mansion then no more of joy serene),
Where fear, distrust, malevolence, abide,
And impotent desire, and disappointed pride ?

IX.

O how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields!
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
All that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven;
O, how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!

X.

These charms shall work thy soul's eternal health,
And love, and gentleness, and joy impart.
But these thou must renounce, if lust of wealth
E'er win its way to thy corrupted heart:
For, ah! it poisons like a scorpion's dart;
Prompting th' ungenerous wish, the selfish scheme,
The stern resolve unmoved by pity's smart,
The troublous day, and long distressful dream.
Return, my roving Muse, resume thy purposed theme.

XI.

There lived in Gothic days, as legends tell,
A shepherd-swain, a man of low degree;
Whose sires, perchance, in Fairyland might dwell,
Sicilian groves, or vales of Arcady;
But he, I ween, was of the north countrie;[1]
A nation famed for song and beauty's charms;
Zealous, yet modest; innocent, though free;
Patient of toil; serene amidst alarms;
Inflexible in faith; invincible in arms.

XII.

The shepherd-swain of whom I mention made,
On Scotia's mountains fed his little flock;
The sickle, scythe, or plough, he never swayed;
An honest heart was almost all his stock;
His drink, the living water from the rock:
The milky dams supplied his board, and lent

Their kindly fleece to baffle winter's shock ;
And he, though oft with dust and sweat besprent,[a]
Did guide and guard their wanderings, wheresoe'er they went.

XIII.

From labour, health—from health, contentment springs ;
Contentment opes the source of every joy.
He envied not, he never thought of kings ;
Nor from those appetites sustained annoy,
That chance may frustrate, or indulgence cloy :
Nor Fate his calm and humbled hopes beguiled ;
He mourned no recreant friend, nor mistress coy,
For on his vows the blameless Phœbe smiled,
And her alone he loved, and loved her from a child.

XIV.

No jealousy their dawn of love o'ercast,
Nor blasted were their wedded days with strife ;
Each season looked delightful as it passed,
To the fond husband and the faithful wife.

[a] Besprinkled. *Wright*

Beyond the lowly vale of shepherd life
They never roamed : secure beneath the storm
Which in Ambition's lofty land is rife,
Where peace and love are cankered by the worm
Of pride, each bud of joy industrious to deform.

XV.

The wight, whose tale these artless lines unfold,
Was all the offspring of this humble pair;
His birth no oracle or seer foretold;
No prodigy appeared in earth or air,
Nor aught that might a strange event declare.
You guess each circumstance of Edwin's birth;
The parent's transport, and the parent's care;
The gossip's prayer for wealth, and wit, and worth;
And one long summer-day of indolence and mirth.

XVI.

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy;
Deep thought oft seemed to fix his infant eye.
Dainties he heeded not, nor gaud nor toy,
Save one short pipe of rudest minstrelsy.
Silent, when glad; affectionate, though shy;
And now his look was most demurely sad;
And now he laughed aloud, yet none knew why.
The neighbours stared and sighed, yet blessed the lad:
Some deemed him wondrous wise, and some believed him mad.

But why should I his childish feats display?
Concourse, and noise, and toil he ever fled;

Nor cared to mingle in the clamorous fray
Of squabbling imps; but to the forest sped,
Or roamed at large the lonely mountain's head;
Or, where the maze of some bewildered stream
To deep untrodden groves his footsteps led;
There would he wander wild, till Phœbus' beam,
Shot from the western cliff, released the weary team.

XVIII.

Th' exploit of strength, dexterity, or speed,
To him nor vanity nor joy could bring.
His heart, from cruel sport estranged, would bleed
To work the woe of any living thing,
By trap or net; by arrow or by sling;
These he detested; those he scorned to wield:
He wished to be the guardian, not the king,
Tyrant far less, or traitor of the field.
And sure the sylvan reign unbloody joy might yield.

XIX.

Lo! where the stripling, wrapt in wonder, roves
Beneath the precipice o'erhung with pine;

And sees, on high, amidst th' encircling groves,
From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine:
While waters, woods, and winds in concert join,

And Echo swells the chorus to the skies.
Would Edwin this majestic scene resign
For aught the huntsman's puny craft supplies?
Ah! no: he better knows great Nature's charms to prize.

XX.

And oft he traced the uplands, to survey,
When o'er the sky advanced the kindling dawn,
The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountain grey,
And lake, dim-gleaming on the smoky lawn;
Far to the west, the long, long vale withdrawn,
Where twilight loves to linger for a while;
And now he faintly kens the bounding fawn,
And villager abroad at early toil.
But, lo! the Sun appears! and heaven, earth, ocean smile.

XXI.

And oft the craggy cliff he loved to climb,
When all in mist the world below was lost.
What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwrecked mariner on desert coast,

And view th' enormous waste of vapour, tossed
In billows, lengthening to th' horizon round,
Now scooped in gulfs, with mountains now embossed!
And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound,
Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar profound!

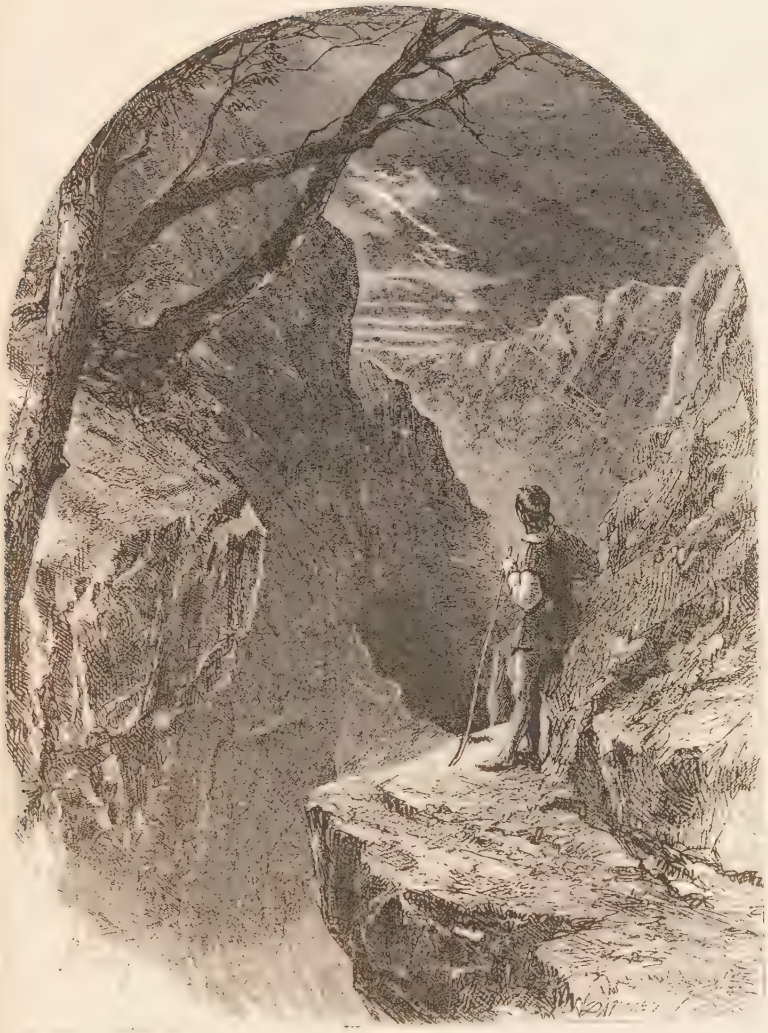
XXII.

In truth, he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle and each dreadful scene.
In darkness and in storm he found delight;
Nor less, than when on ocean-wave serene
The southern Sun diffused his dazzling shene.[a]
Even sad vicissitude amused his soul;
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh, a tear so sweet he wished not to control.

XXIII.

"O ye wild groves, O where is now your bloom!"
(The Muse interprets thus his tender thought.)
"Your flowers, your verdure, and your balmy gloom,

[a] Brightness, splendour.



Of late so grateful in the hour of drought!

Why do the birds that song and rapture brought

To all your bowers, their mansions now forsake?
Ah! why has fickle chance this ruin wrought?
For now the storm howls mournful through the brake,
And the dead foliage flies in many a shapeless flake.

XXIV.

"Where now the rill, melodious, pure, and cool,
And meads, with life, and mirth, and beauty crowned?
Ah! see th' unsightly slime, and sluggish pool,
Have all the solitary vale imbrowned;
Fled each fair form, and mute each melting sound,
The raven croaks forlorn on naked spray:
And, hark! the river bursting every mound,
Down the vale thunders, and with wasteful sway
Uproots the grove, and rolls the shattered rocks away.

XXV.

"Yet such the destiny of all on earth:
So flourishes and fades majestic Man.
Fair is the bud his vernal morn brings forth,
And fostering gales awhile the nursling fan.

O, smile, ye heavens, serene ; ye mildews wan,
Ye blighting whirlwinds, spare his balmy prime,
Nor lessen of his life the little span !

Borne on the swift though silent wings of Time,
Old age comes on apace to ravage all the clime.

XXVI.

"And be it so. Let those deplore their doom,
Whose hope still grovels in this dark sojourn:
But lofty souls who look beyond the tomb,
Can smile at Fate, and wonder how they mourn.
Shall Spring to these sad scenes no more return?
Is yonder wave the Sun's eternal bed?
Soon shall the orient with new lustre burn,
And Spring shall soon her vital influence shed,
Again attune the grove, again adorn the mead.

XXVII.

"Shall I be left forgotten in the dust,
When Fate, relenting, lets the flower revive?
Shall Nature's voice, to Man alone unjust,
Bid him, though doomed to perish, hope to live?
Is it for this fair Virtue oft must strive
With disappointment, penury, and pain?
No! Heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive,

And Man's majestic beauty bloom again,
Bright through th' eternal year of Love's triumphant reign."

XXVIII.

This truth sublime his simple sire had taught:
In sooth, 'twas almost all the shepherd knew.
No subtle or superfluous lore he sought,
Nor ever wished his Edwin to pursue.
"Let man's own sphere," said he, "confine his view,
Be man's peculiar work his sole delight."
And much, and oft, he warned him, to eschew
Falsehood and guile, and aye maintain the right,
By pleasure unseduced, unawed by lawless might.

XXIX.

"And, from the prayer of Want, and plaint of Woe,
O never, never turn away thine ear!
Forlorn, in this bleak wilderness below,
Ah! what were man, should Heaven refuse to hear!
To others do (the law is not severe)
What to thyself thou wishest to be done.
Forgive thy foes; and love thy parents dear,
And friends, and native land; nor those alone;
All human weal and woe learn thou to make thine own."

XXX.

See, in the rear of the warm sunny shower
The visionary boy from shelter fly;
For now the storm of summer rain is o'er,
And cool, and fresh, and fragrant is the sky.

And, lo! in the dark east, expanded high,
The rainbow brightens to the setting sun!
Fond fool, that deemest the streaming glory nigh,
How vain the chase thine ardour has begun!
'Tis fled afar, ere half thy purposed race be run.

XXXI.

Yet couldst thou learn, that thus it fares with age,
When pleasure, wealth, or power the bosom warm,
This baffled hope might tame thy manhood's rage,
And Disappointment of her sting disarm.
But why should foresight thy fond heart alarm?
Perish the lore that deadens young desire!
Pursue, poor imp, th' imaginary charm,
Indulge gay Hope, and Fancy's pleasing fire:
Fancy and Hope too soon shall of themselves expire.

XXXII.

When the long-sounding curfew from afar
Loaded with loud lament the lonely gale,

Young Edwin, lighted by the evening star,
Lingering and listening, wandered down the vale.
There would he dream of graves, and corses pale.
And ghosts that to the charnel-dungeon throng,

And drag a length of clanking chain, and wail,
Till silenced by the owl's terrific song,
Or blast that shrieks by fits the shuddering aisles along.

XXXIII.

Or, when the setting moon, in crimson dyed,
Hung o'er the dark and melancholy deep,
To haunted stream, remote from man, he hied,
Where Fays of yore their revels wont to keep;
And there let Fancy rove at large, till sleep
A vision brought to his entrancèd sight.
And first, a wildly murmuring wind 'gan creep
Shrill to his ringing ear; then tapers bright,
With instantaneous gleam, illumed the vault of night.

XXXIV.

Anon in view a portal's blazoned arch
Arose; the trumpet bids the valves unfold;
And forth an host of little warriors march,
Grasping the diamond lance and targe of gold.

Their look was gentle, their demeanour bold,
And green their helms, and green their silk attire;
And here and there, right venerably old,
The long-robed minstrels wake the warbling wire,
And some with mellow breath the martial pipe inspire.

XXXV.

With merriment, and song, and timbrels clear,
A troop of dames from myrtle bowers advance;
The little warriors doff the targe and spear,
And loud enlivening strains provoke the dance.
They meet, they dart away, they wheel askance;
To right, to left, they thrid the flying maze;
Now bound aloft with vigorous spring, then glance
Rapid along: with many-coloured rays
Of tapers, gems, and gold, the echoing forests blaze.

XXXVI.

The dream is fled. Proud harbinger of day,
Who scaredst the vision with thy clarion shrill,
Fell chanticleer! who oft hast reft away
My fancied good, and brought substantial ill!
O, to thy cursed scream, discordant still,
Let Harmony aye shut her gentle ear:
Thy boastful mirth let jealous rivals spill,
Insult thy crest, and glossy pinions tear,
And ever in thy dreams the ruthless fox appear.

Forbear, my Muse. Let Love attune thy line.
Revoke the spell. Thine Edwin frets not so.

For how should he at wicked chance repine,
Who feels from every change amusement flow!
E'en now his eyes with smiles of rapture glow,
As on he wanders through the scenes of morn,
Where the fresh flowers in living lustre blow,
Where thousand pearls the dewy lawns adorn,
A thousand notes of joy in every breeze are borne.

XXXVIII.

But who the melodies of morn can tell?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side;
The lowing herd; the sheepfold's simple bell;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley; echoing far and wide
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above;
The hollow murmur of the ocean tide;
The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

XXXIX.

The cottage-curs at early pilgrim bark:
Crowned with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings;

The whistling ploughman stalks afield ; and, hark !
Down the rough slope the ponderous wagon rings ;
Through rustling corn the hare astonished springs ;

Slow tolls the village clock the drowsy hour ;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings ;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequestered bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aërial tower.

XL.

O Nature, how in every charm supreme !
Whose votaries feast on raptures ever new !
O for the voice and fire of seraphim,
To sing thy glories with devotion due !
Blest be the day I 'scaped the wrangling crew,
From Pyrrho's maze, and Epicurus' sty ;
And held high converse with the godlike few,
Who to th' enraptured heart, and ear, and eye,
Teach beauty, virtue, truth, and love, and melody.

XLI.

Hence ! ye, who snare and stupify the mind,
Sophists, of beauty, virtue, joy, the bane !
Greedy and fell, though impotent and blind,
Who spread your filthy nets in Truth's fair fane,
And ever ply your venomed fangs amain !

Hence to dark Error's den, whose rankling slime
First gave you form! Hence! lest the Muse should deign
(Though loath on theme so mean to waste a rhyme),
With vengeance to pursue your sacrilegious crime.

XLII.

But hail, ye mighty masters of the lay,
Nature's true sons, the friends of man and truth!
Whose song, sublimely sweet, serenely gay,
Amused my childhood, and informed my youth.
O let your spirit still my bosom soothe,
Inspire my dreams, and my wild wanderings guide:
Your voice each rugged path of life can smooth,
For well I know, wherever ye reside,
There harmony, and peace, and innocence abide.

XLIII.

Ah, me! neglected on the lonesome plain,
As yet poor Edwin never knew your lore,
Save when against the winter's drenching rain,
And driving snow, the cottage shut the door.
Then, as instructed by tradition hoar,

Her legend when the Beldam 'gan impart.
Or chant the old heroic ditty o'er,
Wonder and joy ran thrilling to his heart ;
Much he the tale admired, but more the tuneful art.

XLIV.

Various and strange was the long-winded tale;
And halls, and knights, and feats of arms displayed;
Or merry swains, who quaff the nut-brown ale,
And sing enamoured of the nut-brown maid:
The moonlight revel of the fairy glade;
Or hags, that suckle an infernal brood,
And ply in caves th' unutterable trade,(2)
'Midst fiends and spectres, quench the moon in blood,
Yell in the midnight storm, or ride th' infuriate flood.

XLV.

But when to horror his amazement rose,
A gentler strain the Beldam would rehearse,
A tale of rural life, a tale of woes,
The orphan-babes, and guardian uncle fierce.
O cruel! will no pang of pity pierce
That heart, by lust of lucre seared to stone?
For sure, if aught of virtue last, or verse,
To latest times shall tender souls bemoan
Those hopeless orphan-babes by thy fell arts undone.

XLVI.

Behold, with berries smeared, with brambles torn,
The babes now famished lay them down to die:
Amidst the howl of darksome woods forlorn,
Folded in one another's arms they lie;
Nor friend, nor stranger, hears their dying cry:
"For from the town the man returns no more."
But thou, who Heaven's just vengeance darest defy,
This deed with fruitless tears shalt soon deplore,
When Death lays waste thy house, and flames consume thy store.

XLVII.

A stifled smile of stern vindictive joy
Brightened one moment Edwin's starting tear,—
"But why should gold man's feeble mind decoy,
And Innocence thus die by doom severe?"
O Edwin! while thy heart is yet sincere,
Th' assaults of discontent and doubt repel:
Dark e'en at noontide is our mortal sphere;
But let us hope; to doubt is to rebel;
Let us exult in hope, that all shall yet be well.

XLVIII.

Nor be thy generous indignation checked,
Nor checked the tender tear to Misery given;
From Guilt's contagious power shall that protect,
This soften and refine the soul for Heaven.
But dreadful is their doom, whom doubt has driven

To censure Fate, and pious Hope forego:
Like yonder blasted boughs by lightning riven,
Perfection, beauty, life, they never know,
But frown on all that pass, a monument of woe.

XLIX.

Shall he whose birth, maturity, and age
Scarce fill the circle of one summer day,
Shall the poor gnat, with discontent and rage,
Exclaim that Nature hastens to decay,
If but a cloud obstruct the solar ray,
If but a momentary shower descend?
Or shall frail man Heaven's dread decree gainsay,
Which bade the series of events extend
Wide through unnumbered worlds, and ages without end!

L.

One part—one little part—we dimly scan
Through the dark medium of life's feverish dream;
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
If but that little part incongruous seem.
Nor is that part perhaps what mortals deem;

Oft from apparent ill our blessings rise.
O, then, renounce that impious self-esteem,
That aims to trace the secrets of the skies:
For thou art but of dust; be humble, and be wise.

LI.

Thus Heaven enlarged his soul in riper years.
For Nature gave him strength and fire, to soar
On Fancy's wing above this vale of tears;
Where dark, cold-hearted sceptics, creeping, pore
Through microscope of metaphysic lore:
And much they grope for Truth, but never hit.
For why? Their powers, inadequate before,
This idle art makes more and more unfit;
Yet deem they darkness light, and their vain blunders wit.

LII.

Nor was this ancient dame a foe to mirth.
Her ballad, jest, and riddle's quaint device,
Oft cheered the shepherds round their social hearth;
Whom levity or spleen could ne'er entice
To purchase chat, or laughter, at the price

Of decency. Nor let it faith exceed,
That Nature forms a rustic taste so nice.
Ah! had they been of court or city breed,
Such delicacy were right marvellous indeed.

LIII.

Oft when the winter storm had ceased to rave,
He roamed the snowy waste at even, to view
The cloud stupendous, from th' Atlantic wave
High-towering, sail along th' horizon blue:
Where, midst the changeful scenery, ever new,
Fancy a thousand wondrous forms descries,
More wildly great than ever pencil drew,
Rocks, torrents, gulfs, and shapes of giant size,
And glittering cliffs on cliffs, and fiery ramparts rise.

LIV.

Thence musing onward to the sounding shore,
The lone enthusiast oft would take his way,
Listening, with pleasing dread, to the deep roar
Of the wide-weltering waves. In black array
When sulphurous clouds rolled on th' autumnal day;

E'en then he hastened from the haunt of man,
Along the trembling wilderness to stray,
What time the lightning's fierce career began,
And o'er Heaven's rending arch the rattling thunder ran.

LV.

Responsive to the sprightly pipe, when all
In sprightly dance the village youth were joined,
Edwin, of melody aye held in thrall,
From the rude gambol far remote reclined,
Soothed with the soft notes warbling in the wind.
Ah then, all jollity seemed noise and folly.
To the pure soul by Fancy's fire refined,
Ah, what is mirth but turbulence unholy,
When with the charm compared of heavenly melancholy!

LVI.

Is there a heart that music cannot melt?
Alas, how is that rugged heart forlorn!
Is there, who ne'er those mystic transports felt
Of solitude and melancholy born?
He needs not woo the Muse; he is her scorn.
The sophist's rope of cobweb he shall twine;
Mope o'er the schoolman's peevish page; or mourn,
And delve for life in Mammon's dirty mine;
Sneak with the scoundrel fox, or grunt with glutton swine.

LVII.

For Edwin, Fate a nobler doom had planned ;
Song was his favourite and first pursuit.
The wild harp rang to his adventurous hand,
And languished to his breath the plaintive flute.
His infant Muse, though artless, was not mute :
Of elegance as yet he took no care ;
For this of time and culture is the fruit ;
And Edwin gained at last this fruit so rare :
As in some future verse I purpose to declare.

LVIII.

Meanwhile, whate'er of beautiful, or new,
Sublime, or dreadful, in earth, sea, or sky,
By chance or search, was offered to his view,
He scanned with curious and romantic eye.
Whate'er of lore tradition could supply
From Gothic tale, or song, or fable old,
Roused him still keen to listen and to pry.
At last, though long by penury controlled,
And solitude, his soul her graces 'gan unfold.

LIX

Thus on the chill Lapponian's dreary land,
For many a long month lost in snow profound,
When Sol from Cancer sends the season bland,

And in their northern cave the storms are bound;
From silent mountains, straight, with startling sound,
Torrents are hurled; green hills emerge; and lo,
The trees with foliage, cliffs with flowers are crowned;
Pure rills through vales of verdure warbling go;
And wonder, love, and joy, the peasant's heart o'erflow.(3)

LX.

Here pause, my Gothic lyre, a little while,
The leisure hour is all that thou canst claim.
But on this verse if MONTAGUE should smile,
New strains ere long shall animate thy frame.
And her applause to me is more than fame;
For still with truth accords her taste refined.
At lucre or renown let others aim,
I only wish to please the gentle mind,
Whom Nature's charms inspire, and love of human kind.

BOOK II.

"Doctrina sed vim promovet insitam,
Rectique cultus pectora roborant." HORAT.

Or chance or change, O let not man complain,
Else shall he never, never cease to wail :

For, from th' imperial dome, to where the swain
Rears the lone cottage in the silent dale,
All feel th' assault of Fortune's fickle gale;
Art, empire, earth itself, to change are doomed;
Earthquakes have raised to Heaven the humble vale,
And gulphs the mountain's mighty mass entombed,
And where th' Atlantic rolls wide continents have bloomed.[a]

II.

But sure to foreign climes we need not range,
Nor search the ancient records of our race,
To learn the dire effects of time and change,
Which in ourselves, alas! we daily trace.
Yet, at the darkened eye, the withered face,
Or hoary hair, I never will repine:
But spare, O Time, whate'er of mental grace,
Of candour, love, or sympathy divine,
Whate'er of fancy's ray, or friendship's flame, is mine!

III.

So I, obsequious to Truth's dread command,
Shall here without reluctance change my lay,
And smite the Gothic lyre with harsher hand;

[a] See Plato's Timeus.

Now when I leave that flowery path for aye
Of childhood, where I sported many a day,

Warbling and sauntering carelessly along;
Where every face was innocent and gay,
Each vale romantic, tuneful every tongue,
Sweet, wild, and artless all, as Edwin's infant song.

IV.

"Perish the lore that deadens young desire,"
Is the soft tenor of my song no more.
Edwin, though loved of Heaven, must not aspire
To bliss, which mortals never knew before.
On trembling wings let youthful fancy soar,
Nor always haunt the sunny realms of joy:
But now and then the shades of life explore;
Though many a sound and sight of woe annoy,
And many a qualm of care his rising hopes destroy.

V.

Vigour from toil, from trouble patience grows;
The weakly blossom, warm in summer bower,
Some tints of transient beauty may disclose;
But soon it withers in the chilling hour.
Mark yonder oaks! Superior to the power
Of all the warring winds of Heaven they rise,
And from the stormy promontory tower,

And toss their giant arms amid the skies,
While each assailing blast increase of strength supplies.

VI.

And now the downy cheek and deepened voice
Gave dignity to Edwin's blooming prime;
And walks of wider circuit were his choice,
And vales more mild, and mountains more sublime.
One evening as he framed the careless rhyme,
It was his chance to wander far abroad,
And o'er a lonely eminence to climb,
Which heretofore his foot had never trode;
A vale appeared below, a deep retired abode.

VII.

Thither he hied, enamoured of the scene;
For rocks on rocks piled, as by magic spell,
Here scorched with lightning, there with ivy green,
Fenced from the north and east this savage dell.
Southward a mountain rose with easy swell,
Whose long, long groves eternal murmur made;
And toward the western sun a streamlet fell,
Where, through the cliffs, the eye remote surveyed
Blue hills, and glittering waves, and skies in gold arrayed.

Along this narrow valley you might see
The wild deer sporting on the meadow ground,

And, here and there, a solitary tree,
Or mossy stone, or rock with woodbine crowned.
Oft did the cliffs reverberate the sound
Of parted fragments tumbling from on high;
And from the summit of that craggy mound
The perching eagle oft was heard to cry,
Or on resounding wings to shoot athwart the sky.

IX.

One cultivated spot there was, that spread
Its flowery bosom to the noon-day beam,
Where many a rose-bud rears its blushing head,
And herbs for food with future plenty teem.
Soothed by the lulling sound of grove and stream,
Romantic visions swarm on Edwin's soul:
He minded not the sun's last trembling gleam,
Nor heard from far the twilight curfew toll;
When slowly on his ear these moving accents stole:

X.

"Hail, awful scenes, that calm the troubled breast,
And woo the weary to profound repose!
Can Passion's wildest uproar lay to rest,

And whisper comfort to the man of woes!
Here Innocence may wander, safe from foes,
And Contemplation soar on seraph wings.
O Solitude! the man who thee foregoes,
When lucre lures him, or ambition stings,
Shall never know the source whence real grandeur springs.

XI.

"Vain man! is grandeur given to gay attire?
Then let the butterfly thy pride upbraid:
To friends, attendants, armies, bought with hire?
It is thy weakness that requires their aid:
To palaces, with gold and gems inlaid?
They fear the thief, and tremble in the storm:
To hosts, through carnage who to conquest wade?
Behold the victor vanquished by the worm!
Behold, what deeds of woe the locust can perform!

XII.

"True dignity is his, whose tranquil mind
Virtue has raised above the things below;
Who, every hope and fear to Heaven resigned,
Shrinks not, though Fortune aim her deadliest blow."

This strain from midst the rocks was heard to flow
In solemn sounds. Now beamed the evening star;
And from embattled clouds emerging slow
Cynthia came riding on her silver car;
And hoary mountain-cliffs shone faintly from afar.

XIII.

Soon did the solemn voice its theme renew;
(While Edwin wrapt in wonder listening stood:)
"Ye tools and toys of tyranny, adieu,
Scorned by the wise and hated by the good!
Ye only can engage the servile brood
Of Levity and Lust, who all their days,
Ashamed of truth and liberty, have wooed
And hugged the chain, that, glittering on their gaze,
Seems to outshine the pomp of Heaven's empyreal blaze.

XIV.

"Like them, abandoned to Ambition's sway,
I sought for glory in the paths of guile;
And fawned and smiled, to plunder and betray,
Myself betrayed and plundered all the while;

So gnawed the viper the corroding file:
But now, with pangs of keen remorse, I rue
Those years of trouble and debasement vile.
Yet why should I this cruel theme pursue!
Fly, fly, detested thoughts, for ever from my view!

XV.

" The gusts of appetite, the clouds of care,
And storms of disappointment, all o'erpast,
Henceforth no earthly hope with Heaven shall share
This heart, where peace serenely shines at last.
And if for me no treasure be amassed,
And if no future age shall hear my name,
I lurk the more secure from Fortune's blast,
And with more leisure feed this pious flame,
Whose rapture far transcends the fairest hopes of fame.

XVI.

" The end and the reward of toil is rest.
Be all my prayer for virtue and for peace.
Of wealth and fame, of pomp and power possessed,
Who ever felt his weight of woe decrease?
Ah! what avails the lore of Rome and Greece,
The lay heaven-prompted, and harmonious string,
The dust of Ophir, or the Tyrian fleece,
All that art, fortune, enterprise can bring,
If envy, scorn, remorse, or pride the bosom wring!

XVII.

" Let Vanity adorn the marble tomb
With trophies, rhymes, and scutcheons of renown,
In the deep dungeon of some Gothic dome,
Where night and desolation ever frown.
Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the down,
Where a green grassy turf is all I crave,
With here and there a violet bestrown,
Fast by a brook, a fountain's murmuring wave ;
And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave.

XVIII.

" And thither let the village swain repair;
And, light of heart, the village maiden gay,
To deck with flowers her half-disheveled hair,
And celebrate the merry morn of May.
There let the shepherd's pipe the live-long day
Fill all the grove with love's bewitching woe;
And when mild Evening comes in mantle grey,
Let not the blooming band make haste to go;
No ghost, nor spell, my long and last abode shall know.

XIX.

" For though I fly to 'scape from Fortune's rage,
And bear the scars of envy, spite, and scorn,
Yet with mankind no horrid war I wage,
Yet with no impious spleen my breast is torn:
For virtue lost, and ruined man, I mourn.
O Man! creation's pride, Heaven's darling child,
Whom Nature's best, divinest gifts adorn,
Why from thy home are truth and joy exiled,
And all thy favourite haunts with blood and tears defiled!

"Along yon glittering sky what glory streams!
What majesty attends Night's lovely queen!

Fair laugh our valleys in the vernal beams;
And mountains rise, and oceans roll between,
And all conspire to beautify the scene.
But, in the mental world, what chaos drear!
What forms of mournful, loathsome, furious mien!
O when shall that Eternal Morn appear,
These dreadful forms to chase, this chaos dark to clear!

XXI.

"O Thou, at whose creative smile, yon Heaven,
In all the pomp of beauty, life, and light,
Rose from th' abyss; when dark Confusion, driven
Down, down the bottomless profound of night,
Fled, where he ever flies thy piercing sight!
O glance on these sad shades one pitying ray,
To blast the fury of oppressive might,
Melt the hard heart to love and mercy's sway,
And cheer the wandering soul, and light him on the way!"

XXII.

Silence ensued: and Edwin raised his eyes
In tears, for grief lay heavy at his heart.
"And is it thus in courtly life," he cries,

"That man to man acts a betrayer's part?
And dares he thus the gifts of Heaven pervert,
Each social instinct, and sublime desire?
Hail, Poverty! if honour, wealth, and art,
If what the great pursue, and learned admire,
Thus dissipate and quench the soul's ethereal fire!"

XXIII.

He said, and turned away; nor did the Sage
O'erhear, in silent orisons employed.
The Youth, his rising sorrow to assuage,
Home as he hied, the evening scene enjoyed:
For now no cloud obscures the starry void;
The yellow moonlight sleeps on all the hills;[a]
Nor is the mind with startling sounds annoyed;
A soothing murmur the lone region fills,
Of groves, and dying gales, and melancholy rills.

XXIV.

But he from day to day more anxious grew.
The voice still seemed to vibrate on his ear.
Nor durst he hope the Hermit's tale untrue;
For Man he seemed to love, and Heaven to fear;
And none speaks false, where there is none to hear.
"Yet, can man's gentle heart become so fell!
No more in vain conjecture let me wear
My hours away, but seek the Hermit's cell;
'Tis he my doubt can clear, perhaps my care dispel."

[a] "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!"
SHAKESPEARE, *Merchant of Venice*, Act V. Sc. 1

XXV.

At early dawn the Youth his journey took,
And many a mountain passed and valley wide,
Then reached the wild; where, in a flowery nook,
And seated on a mossy stone, he spied
An ancient man: his harp lay him beside.
A stag sprang from the pasture at his call,
And, kneeling, licked the withered hand that tied
A wreath of woodbine round his antlers tall,
And hung his lofty neck with many a flowret small.

XXVI.

And now the hoary Sage arose, and saw
The wanderer approaching: innocence
Smiled on his glowing cheek, but modest awe
Depressed his eye, that feared to give offence.
"Who art thou, courteous stranger; and from whence?
Why roam thy steps to this sequestered dale?"
"A shepherd-boy," the Youth replied, "far hence
My habitation; hear my artless tale;
Nor levity nor falsehood shall thine ear assail.

XXVII.

"Late as I roamed, intent on Nature's charms,
I reached at eve this wilderness profound;
And, leaning where yon oak expands her arms,
Heard these rude cliffs thine awful voice rebound
(For in thy speech I recognise the sound).
You mourned for ruined man, and virtue lost,
And seemed to feel of keen remorse the wound,
Pondering on former days, by guilt engrossed,
Or in the giddy storm of dissipation tossed.

XXVIII.

"But say, in courtly life can craft be learned,
Where knowledge opens and exalts the soul?
Where Fortune lavishes her gifts unearned,
Can selfishness the liberal heart control?
Is glory there achieved by arts, as foul
As those that felons, fiends, and furies plan?
Spiders ensnare, snakes poison, tigers prowl;
Love is the godlike attribute of man.
O teach a simple Youth this mystery to scan!

XXIX.

"Or else the lamentable strain disclaim,
And give me back the calm, contented mind;
Which, late exulting, viewed in Nature's frame,
Goodness untainted, wisdom unconfined,
Grace, grandeur, and utility combined.
Restore those tranquil days, that saw me still
Well pleased with all, but most with human kind:
When Fancy roamed through Nature's works at will,
Unchecked by cold distrust, and uninformed of ill."

XXX.

"Wouldst thou," the Sage replied, "in peace return
To the gay dreams of fond romantic youth?
Leave me to hide, in this remote sojourn,
From every gentle ear the dreadful truth:
For if my desultory strain with ruth
And indignation make thine eyes o'erflow,
Alas! what comfort could thy anguish soothe,
Shouldst thou th' extent of human folly know!
Be ignorance thy choice, where knowledge leads to woe.

XXXI.

"But let untender thoughts afar be driven:
Nor venture to arraign the dread decree.
For know, to man, as candidate for heaven,
The voice of The Eternal said, 'Be free:'
And this divine prerogative to thee
Does virtue, happiness, and Heaven convey;
For virtue is the child of liberty,
And happiness of virtue; nor can they
Be free to keep the path, who are not free to stray.

XXXII.

"Yet leave me not. I would allay that grief,
Which else might thy young virtue overpower;
And in thy converse I shall find relief,
When the dark shades of melancholy lower;
For solitude has many a dreary hour,
Even when exempt from grief, remorse, and pain:
Come often then; for, haply, in my bower,
Amusement, knowledge, wisdom thou mayst gain:
If I one soul improve, I have not lived in vain."

XXXIII.

And now, at length, to Edwin's ardent gaze
The Muse of history unrolls her page.
But few, alas! the scenes her art displays,
To charm his fancy, or his heart engage.
Here Chiefs their thirst of power in blood assuage,
And straight their flames with tenfold fierceness burn:
Here smiling Virtue prompts the patriot's rage,
But lo, ere long, is left alone to mourn,
And languish in the dust, and clasp th' abandoned urn.

XXXIV.

"Ambition's slippery verge shall mortals tread,
Where ruin's gulf unfathomed yawns beneath!
Shall life, shall liberty be lost," he said,
"For the vain toys that pomp and power bequeath?
The car of victory, the plume, the wreath,
Defend not from the bolt of fate the brave:
No note the clarion of Renown can breathe,
T' alarm the long night of the lonely grave,
Or check the headlong haste of Time's o'erwhelming wave.[a]

XXXV.

"Ah, what avails it to have traced the springs,
That whirl of empire the stupendous wheel!
Ah, what have I to do with conquering kings,
Hands drenched in blood, and breasts begirt with steel!
To those, whom Nature taught to think and feel,
Heroes, alas! are things of small concern;
Could History man's secret heart reveal,
And what imports a heaven-born mind to learn,
Her transcripts to explore what bosom would not yearn!

[a] This stanza is not found in the first edition.

XXXVI.

"This praise, O Cheronean sage,[a] is thine!
(Why should this praise to thee alone belong?)
All else from Nature's moral path decline,
Lured by the toys that captivate the throng;
To herd in cabinets and camps, among
Spoil, carnage, and the cruel pomp of pride;
Or chant of heraldry the drowsy song,
How tyrant blood, o'er many a region wide,
Rolls to a thousand thrones its execrable tide.

XXXVII.

"O who of man the story will unfold,
Ere victory and empire wrought annoy,
In that Elysian age (misnamed of gold),
The age of love, and innocence, and joy,
When all were great and free! man's sole employ
To deck the bosom of his parent earth;
Or toward his bower the murmuring stream decoy,
To aid the flowret's long-expected birth,
And lull the bed of peace, and crown the board of mirth.

[a] Plutarch.

XXXVIII.

"Sweet were your shades, O ye primeval groves!
Whose boughs to man his food and shelter lent,
Pure in his pleasures, happy in his loves,
His eye still smiling, and his heart content.
Then, hand in hand, health, sport, and labour went.
Nature supplied the wish she taught to crave.
None prowled for prey, none watched to circumvent.
To all an equal lot Heaven's bounty gave:
No vassal feared his lord, no tyrant feared his slave.

XXXIX.

"But, ah! th' Historic Muse has never dared
To pierce those hallowed bowers: 'tis Fancy's beam
Poured on the vision of th' enraptured bard,
That paints the charms of that delicious theme.
Then hail, sweet Fancy's ray! and hail the dream
That weans the weary soul from guilt and woe!
Careless what others of my choice may deem,
I long, where Love and Fancy lead, to go
And meditate on Heaven; enough of Earth I know."

XL.

"I cannot blame thy choice," the Sage replied,
"For soft and smooth are Fancy's flowery ways.
And yet, e'en there, if left without a guide,
The young adventurer unsafely plays.
Eyes dazzled long by Fiction's gaudy rays,
In modest Truth no light nor beauty find.
And who, my child, would trust the meteor-blaze,
That soon must fail, and leave the wanderer blind,
More dark and helpless far, than if it ne'er had shined?

XLI.

"Fancy enervates, while it soothes, the heart,
And, while it dazzles, wounds the mental sight;
To joy each heightening charm it can impart,
But wraps the hour of woe in tenfold night.
And often, where no real ills affright,
Its visionary fiends, an endless train,
Assail with equal or superior might,
And through the throbbing heart, and dizzy brain,
And shivering nerves, shoot stings of more than mortal pain.

XLII.

"And yet, alas! the real ills of life
Claim the full vigour of a mind prepared,
Prepared for patient, long, laborious strife,
Its guide Experience, and Truth its guard.
We fare on earth as other men have fared.
Were they successful? Let us not despair.
Was disappointment oft their sole reward?
Yet shall their tale instruct, if it declare
How they have borne the load ourselves are doomed to bear.

XLIII.

"What charms th' Historic Muse adorn, from spoils,
And blood, and tyrants, when she wings her flight,
To hail the patriot Prince, whose pious toils,
Sacred to science, liberty, and right,
And peace, through every age divinely bright
Shall shine the boast and wonder of mankind!
Sees yonder sun, from his meridian height,
A lovelier scene, than Virtue thus enshrined
In power, and man with man for mutual aid combined?

XLIV.

"Hail, sacred Polity, by Freedom reared!
Hail, sacred Freedom, when by Law restrained!
Without you what were man? A grovelling herd,
In darkness, wretchedness, and want enchained.
Sublimed by you, the Greek and Roman reigned,
In arts unrivaled: O, to latest days,
In Albion may your influence unprofaned
To godlike worth the generous bosom raise,
And prompt the Sage's lore, and fire the Poet's lays!

XLV.

"But now let other themes our care engage.
For lo, with modest yet majestic grace,
To curb Imagination's lawless rage,
And from within the cherished heart to brace,
Philosophy appears! The gloomy race
By Indolence and moping Fancy bred,
Fear, Discontent, Solicitude, give place,
And Hope and Courage brighten in their stead,
While on the kindling soul her vital beams are shed.

XLVI.

" Then waken from long lethargy to life(4)
The seeds of happiness, and powers of thought;
Then jarring appetites forego their strife,
A strife by ignorance to madness wrought.
Pleasure by savage man is dearly bought
With fell revenge; lust that defies control,
With gluttony and death. The mind untaught
Is a dark waste, where fiends and tempests howl;
As Phœbus to the world, is Science to the soul.

XLVII.

" And Reason now through Number, Time, and Space,
Darts the keen lustre of her serious eye,
And learns, from facts compared, the laws to trace,
Whose long progression leads to Deity.
Can mortal strength presume to soar so high!
Can mortal sight, so oft bedimmed with tears,
Such glory bear!—for lo, the shadows fly
From Nature's face; Confusion disappears,
And Order charms the eye, and Harmony the ears!

XLVIII.

" In the deep windings of the grove, no more
The hag obscene and grisly phantom dwell;
Nor in the fall of mountain-stream, or roar
Of winds, is heard the angry spirit's yell;
No wizard mutters the tremendous spell,
Nor sinks convulsive in prophetic swoon;
Nor bids the noise of drums and trumpets swell
To ease of fancied pangs the labouring moon,
Or chase the shade that blots the blazing orb of noon.

XLIX.

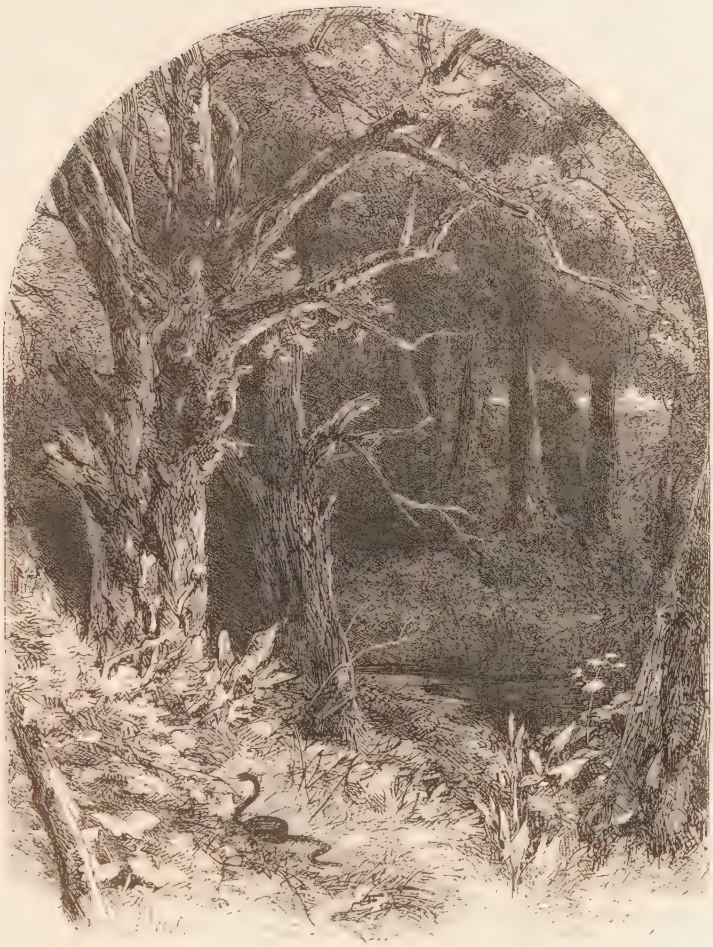
" Many a long-lingering year, in lonely isle,
Stunned with th' eternal turbulence of waves,
Lo, with dim eyes, that never learned to smile,
And trembling hands, the famished native craves
Of Heaven his wretched fare; shivering in caves,
Or scorched on rocks, he pines from day to day;
But Science gives the word; and lo, he braves
The surge and tempest, lighted by her ray,
And to a happier land wafts merrily away.

L.

" And even where Nature loads the teeming plain
With the full pomp of vegetable store,
Her bounty, unimproved, is deadly bane:
Dark woods and rankling wilds, from shore to shore,
Stretch their enormous gloom; which to explore
Even Fancy trembles, in her sprightliest mood;
For there each eye-ball gleams with lust of gore,
Nestles each murderous and each monstrous brood,
Plague lurks in every shade, and steams from every flood.

LI.

" 'Twas from Philosophy man learned to tame
The soil, by plenty to intemperance fed.
Lo, from the echoing axe, and thundering flame,
Poison and plague and yelling rage are fled!
The waters, bursting from their slimy bed,
Bring health and melody to every vale:
And, from the breezy main, and mountain's head,
Ceres and Flora, to the sunny dale,
To fan their glowing charms, invite the fluttering gale.



" What dire necessities on every hand
Our art, our strength, our fortitude require !

Of foes intestine what a numerous band
Against this little throb of life conspire!
Yet Science can elude their fatal ire
Awhile, and turn aside Death's leveled dart,
Soothe the sharp pang, allay the fever's fire,
And brace the nerves once more, and cheer the heart,
And yet a few soft nights and balmy days impart.

LIII.

"Nor less to regulate man's moral frame
Science exerts her all-composing sway.
Flutters thy breast with fear, or pants for fame,
Or pines, to indolence and spleen a prey,
Or avarice, a fiend more fierce than they?
Flee to the shade of Academus' grove;
Where cares molest not, discord melts away
In harmony, and the pure passions prove
How sweet the words of Truth, breathed from the lips of Love.

LIV.

"What cannot Art and Industry perform,
When Science plans the progress of their toil?

They smile at Penury, Disease, and Storm;
And oceans from their mighty mounds recoil.
When tyrants scourge, or demagogues embroil
A land, or when the rabble's headlong rage
Order transforms to anarchy and spoil,
Deep-versed in man, the philosophic sage
Prepares with lenient hand their frenzy to assuage.

LV.

"'T is he alone, whose comprehensive mind,
From situation, temper, soil, and clime
Explored, a nation's various powers can bind,
And various orders in one form sublime
Of policy, that, midst the wrecks of time,
Secure shall lift its head on high, nor fear
Th' assault of foreign or domestic crime,
While public faith, and public love sincere,
And industry and law, maintain their sway severe."

LVI.

Enraptured by the Hermit's strain, the Youth
Proceeds the path of Science to explore,

And now, expanded to the beams of Truth,
New energies, and charms unknown before,
His mind discloses: Fancy now no more
Wantons on fickle pinion through the skies;
But, fixed in aim, and conscious of her power,
Aloft from cause to cause exults to rise,
Creation's blended stores arranging as she flies.

LVII.

Nor love of novelty alone inspires,
Their laws and nice dependencies to scan:
For, mindful of the aids that life requires,
And of the services man owes to man,
He meditates new arts on Nature's plan;
The cold desponding breast of Sloth to warm,
The flame of Industry and Genius fan,
And Emulation's noble rage alarm,
And the long hours of Toil and Solitude to charm.

LVIII.

But She, who set on fire his infant heart,
And all his dreams, and all his wanderings shared

And blessed, the Muse, and her celestial art,
Still claim th' enthusiast's fond and first regard.
From Nature's beauties variously compared
And variously combined, he learns to frame
Those forms of bright perfection,(5) which the bard,
While boundless hopes and boundless views inflame,
Enamoured consecrates to never-dying fame.

LIX.

Of late, with cumbersome, though pompous show,
Edwin would oft his flowery rhyme deface,
Through ardour to adorn; but Nature now
To his experienced eye a modest grace
Presents, where ornament the second place
Holds, to intrinsic worth and just design
Subservient still. Simplicity apace
Tempers his rage, he owns her charm divine,
And clears th' ambiguous phrase, and lops th' unwieldy line.

LX.

Fain would I sing (much yet unsung remains)
What sweet delirium o'er his bosom stole,

When the great Shepherd of the Mantuan plains[a]
His deep majestic melody 'gan roll:
Fain would I sing what transport stormed his soul,
How the red current throbbed his veins along,
When, like Pelides, bold beyond control,
Without art graceful, without effort strong,
Homer raised high to heaven the loud, th' impetuous song.

LXI.

And how his lyre, though rude her first essays,
Now skilled to soothe, to triumph, to complain,
Warbling at will through each harmonious maze,
Was taught to modulate the artful strain,
I fain would sing:—but ah! I strive in vain.
Sighs from a breaking heart my voice confound.
With trembling step, to join yon weeping train,
I haste, where gleams funereal glare around,
And, mixed with shrieks of woe, the knells of death resound.

LXII.

Adieu, ye lays, that Fancy's flowers adorn,
The soft amusement of the vacant mind!

[a] Virgil.

He sleeps in dust, and all the Muses mourn,
He, whom each virtue fired, each grace refined,
Friend, teacher, pattern, darling of mankind!
He sleeps in dust.[a] Ah, how shall I pursue
My theme! To heart-consuming grief resigned,
Here on his recent grave I fix my view,
And pour my bitter tears. Ye flowery lays, adieu!

[a] This excellent person died suddenly on the 10th of February, 1773. The conclusion of the poem was written a few days after.

LXIII.

Art thou, my GREGORY, for ever fled?
And am I left to unavailing woe?
When Fortune's storms assail this weary head,
Where cares long since have shed untimely snow,
Ah, now for comfort whither shall I go?
No more thy soothing voice my anguish cheers:
Thy placid eyes with smiles no longer glow,
My hopes to cherish and allay my fears.
'Tis meet that I should mourn: flow forth afresh, my tears.

NOTES.

[1] P. 9. There is hardly an ancient ballad, or romance, wherein a Minstrel or a Harper appears, but he is characterised, by way of eminence, to have been "*of the north countrie.*" It is probable, that under this appellation were formerly comprehended all the provinces to the north of the Trent. See Percy's Essay on the English Minstrels.

[2] P. 37. Allusion to Shakespeare :—

> *Macbeth.* How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags,
> What is 't you do?
> *Witches.* A deed *without a name.*—MACBETH, Act IV. Sc. 1.

[3] P. 47. Spring and autumn are hardly known to the Laplanders. About the time the sun enters Cancer, their fields which a week before were covered with snow, appear on a sudden full of grass and flowers.—*Scheffer's History of Lapland*, p. 16.

[4] P. 80. The influence of the philosophic spirit in humanizing the mind, and preparing it for intellectual exertion and delicate pleasure,—in exploring by the help of geometry, the system of the universe,—in banishing superstition,—in promoting navigation, agriculture, medicine, and moral and political science,—is shown in this portion of the poem. See Stanzas XLVI. to LVI.

[5] P. 87. General ideas of excellence, the immediate archetypes of sublime imitation, both in painting and in poetry. See Aristotle's Poetics, and the Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

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